



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

February 12, 2008

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

FEDERAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND YEAR OF THE 110TH CONGRESS (ALL DISTRICTS AFFECTED) (3 VOTES)

This letter recommends updated Federal legislative policies, which were developed in coordination with Board Offices, County departments, the Legislative Strategist, and our Washington, D.C. advocates. This package, together with other positions previously adopted by your Board, will guide our Federal advocacy efforts for the second year of the 110th Congress.

THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve the attached additions and changes to existing Board-adopted legislative positions. In general, these changes seek to secure increased Federal funding, enhance the County's ability to deliver effective services and address needs, and achieve greater flexibility over the use of Federal funds.
2. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer, affected departments, the Legislative Strategist, and our Washington, D.C. advocates to work with the County delegation, other counties and local governments, and interest groups to pursue these positions.

LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET OUTLOOK

Last year at the start of the 110th Congress, the Democrats assumed majority control of both houses of Congress. After vetoing only one bill during his first six years in office, President Bush vetoed seven bills in 2007, including two State Children's Health Insurance Program reauthorization bills. The Water Resources Development Act reauthorization bill (H.R. 1495) was the only vetoed bill overridden by Congress. Democrat legislative initiatives also were blocked by parliamentary delaying tactics ("filibusters") in the Senate. A 60-vote majority is needed to close debate on legislation on the Senate floor, which is difficult for the Democrats to secure given their slim one-vote majority. We expect the stalemate in Congress over many key issues to continue in 2008.

Much of the Congressional action of County interest in 2008 will center on Federal budget issues, especially on Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 appropriations bills, which fund discretionary programs. Similar to last year, President Bush's proposed FFY 2009 Budget will call for less funding for domestic programs than supported by Democrats. We expect overall funding for domestic discretionary programs in FFY 2009 to be roughly the same as in FFY 2008. In a competitive zero-sum budget environment, the County will continue to focus our advocacy efforts on pursuing funding for high priority programs – especially those, such as the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program and HIV/AIDS programs, through which the County receives a relatively high share of total funding.

Another priority for Federal advocacy this year will be the pursuit of legislation to block the implementation of various regulatory changes aimed at reducing Federal Medicaid funding. Most notably, we will pursue legislation to extend the current County-supported moratorium on the implementation of the interim final rule which caps Medicaid payments to government providers and the proposed rule which provides that costs associated with Graduate Medical Education are not allowable expenditures that are reimbursable by Medicaid. Under current law, this moratorium ends on May 25, 2008. If implemented, these two regulations could result in an estimated total combined loss of \$240 million a year to the County's public hospitals. The reinstitution of "pay-as-you-go" (PAYGO) rule, which requires legislation that increases entitlement spending or decreases revenues to include offsetting spending cuts or revenue increases, however, makes it more difficult to pass legislation which increases entitlement spending, including legislation to extend the moratorium on Medicaid regulations.

This year, Congress will consider several major reauthorization bills of County importance, including reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program, which would be extended under the Farm Bill, which is pending conference committee action. Other programs requiring reauthorization include McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Workforce Investment Act programs. However, in recent years, these programs have been reauthorized and funded a year at a time through annual appropriations bills. Congress also may seek to pass a multi-year reauthorization bill for the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which recently was reauthorized through March 31, 2009. Finally, hearings are expected to begin on reauthorization of surface transportation programs, which will expire at the end of FFY 2009.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE COUNTY'S FEDERAL AGENDA

The changes in the attachment represent requests from County departments and commissions to add or modify policy statements consistent with their operational goals and plans. These recommended policy changes will enable County departments and advocates to pursue positions on issues for which no applicable Board policy currently exists. The recommendations include new policies relating to the integration of mental health and substance abuse prevention and services, HIV/AIDS screening, treatment and prevention, nutrition education, reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, mentoring and after-school recreation activities for at-risk youth, fair housing activities, hazardous waste cleanup, and energy conservation and efficiency. All other previously adopted Federal Legislative Agenda policies and positions remain in effect; and as such, advocacy will continue on these matters. A revised comprehensive list of all Federal Legislative Agenda policy statements will be published subsequent to consideration of the changes included in the attachment.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

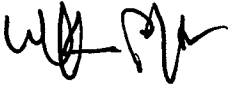
The proposed legislative policies in the Federal Agenda are consistent with the County's Strategic Plan Goals of Organizational Effectiveness and Fiscal Responsibility. Organizational Effectiveness is achieved by providing timely advocacy on proposals that could significantly affect the County. Fiscal Responsibility results from efforts by the CEO, Washington, D.C. advocates, and County departments pursuing new funding sources and opposing cuts in program funding or new unfunded mandates on county government.

Each Supervisor
February 12, 2008
Page 4

CONCLUSION

The updated legislative policies in the attachment are submitted for your Board's consideration as the guiding principles for our advocacy efforts during the second year of the 110th Congress. The policies contained in this package are in addition to, and are not intended to be exclusive of, other positions your Board has adopted. As in the past, the Federal Legislative Agenda will be updated to reflect subsequent Board actions.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:GK
MAL:MT:hg

Attachment

c: County Counsel
All Department Heads

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICIES

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Health/Mental Health	1
3. HIV/AIDS Programs	2
4. Health and Human Services Reform	2
7. Children and Family Services	2
15. Housing and Homeless Assistance	3
18. Air, Water, and Resources	4
19. Waste Management and Superfund	4
21 Utilities and Energy	4
25. Federalism	5

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICIES ADDRESSING ISSUES OF MAJOR COUNTY INTEREST

1. Health/Mental Health

i. Support proposals to increase Medicare payments for graduate medical education to assist public teaching hospitals, which play a critical role in training residents, **and to increase funding for graduate medical education programs in preventive medicine under Medicare or other programs.**

(Requested by Department of Public Health (DPH): Graduate medical education in preventive medicine is an important medical specialty which receives inadequate financial support from the Federal government. They currently do not receive any Medicare funding, and receive limited funding through the Health Resources and Services Administration.)

j. Support proposals and funding to enhance the nation's public health infrastructure and the capacity of local public hospitals, **mental health departments,** and health departments to prepare for and respond to acts of terrorism and other medical and public health emergencies.

(Requested by Department of Mental Health (DMH): This change clarifies that existing policy includes support for enhancing the capacity of mental health departments as well as public hospitals and health departments to prepare for and respond to terrorism and other emergencies.)

m. Support proposals which provide **and** funding to **which would** promote and market the availability of County health **and mental health** services, ~~and~~ which expand and improve access to health care **and mental health** services for the uninsured, women, and other populations with special needs, **and which decrease health and mental health disparities among ethnic and cultural groups.**

(Requested by DMH: This addition is consistent with County efforts to reduce disparities in services provided to the County's large multi-ethnic population.)

o. Support proposals which would expand or improve mental health and substance abuse coverage under public and private health insurance programs **and which would fund and integrate mental health and substance abuse prevention, treatment, and services as part of a continuum of services under substance abuse, mental health, health, human services, and other public programs.**

(Requested by DPH and DMH: The integration of substance abuse and mental health services with other related services, would improve service delivery and better meet the needs of individuals who have mental disorders as well as substance abuse problems.)

t. Support proposals which allow public hospitals and other County health, public health, and mental health facilities and programs to access discounted pharmaceutical pricing schedules available to the Federal government.

(Requested by DPH and DMH: This policy would extend the discounted pharmaceutical pricing currently available to the County's public hospitals to other County health services, public health, and mental health programs, resulting in major cost savings.)

3. Ryan White CARE Act Reauthorization HIV/AIDS Programs

a. Support legislation to reauthorize Ryan White CARE Act programs that will ensure adequate appropriations and equitable distribution of resources. proposals that would increase funding for HIV/AIDS programs and activities, including Ryan White programs, HIV/AIDS screening, prevention, treatment, care, and research activities.

(Requested by DPH: Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs have been reauthorized through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009. The proposed changes broaden Board policies to allow the pursuit of positions on proposals affecting any HIV/AIDS program or activity, not limited to Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs.)

f. Support proposals which would increase the availability of and access to routine HIV screening and HIV/AIDS care, treatment, prevention, research, and education programs.

(Requested by DPH: This policy recommendation broadens existing policies relating to Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs to cover a more comprehensive range of services and activities, including routine HIV screening, prevention, research, and education.)

4. Health and Human Services Reform

u. Support proposals which would increase nutrition education, provide consumers with more nutritional information on foods, and discourage the marketing of non-nutritious foods and beverages to children.

(Requested by DPH: The increase in obesity rates among both children and adults is a significant and growing public health problem, which can be addressed, in part, by increasing nutrition education and information and discouraging the marketing of non-nutritious foods and beverages to children whose food and beverage choices are greatly influenced by advertising.)

7. Children and Family Services

j. Support proposals and funding to promote and increase intervention, prevention, training, technical assistance, research, and education in the areas of domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse, including through the reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

(Requested by Department of Children and Family Services: Legislation is needed to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act which authorizes Federal funding to support prevention, program development, technical assistance, training, and research addressing child abuse.)

t. Support proposals and funding to expand mentoring services and after-school recreation activities for at-risk youth.

(Requested by Parks and Recreation: Expanded mentoring services and after-school recreation activities are needed by at-risk youth, and could lead to reduced crime and gang activity.)

15. Housing and Homeless Assistance

h. Support the reauthorization of the McKinney-**Vento** Homeless Assistance Act and proposals which would increase local discretion over the use of homeless assistance funds, increase funding for homeless assistance programs, including supportive housing, supportive services, emergency services, and the Homeless Management Information System, and more equitably distribute funds based on relative need, **and fund the renewal of contracts for permanent housing from a separate homeless program account rather than Section 8 funds.**

(Requested by Community Development Commission (CDC): Based on this policy, the County would oppose language in a McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act reauthorization bill (S. 1518), which would use Section 8 funds to renew permanent housing contracts, thereby, reducing the amount of funds available for Section 8 tenant or project-based vouchers. Permanent housing contracts for the homeless, instead, should be funded under a homeless assistance program, not the Section 8 Program, which currently is under funded.)

i. Support proposals and funding that would increase fair housing activities.

(Requested by CDC: This policy is needed because there is a major unmet need for fair housing activities, which have not received increased funding for many years.)

n. Support proposals that would enhance the ability of public housing authorities (PHAs) to prevent fraud and collect unpaid rents, such as the creation of a central database which would allow PHAs to receive information on tenants and applicants who owe money or committed fraud on another PHA program **and the sharing of information between HUD and other Federal means-tested benefit programs.**

(Requested by CDC: The sharing of information between HUD and other Federal means-tested benefit programs would be helpful in identifying and preventing fraud by program participants.)

18. Air, Water, and Resources

k. Support proposals and funding for **flood protection, water conservation**, pollution control activities, storm drain improvements, and the replacement of septic systems in the County, **stormwater management, and low impact development practices**.

(Requested by DPH: The proposed changes are consistent with your Board's support for flood protection, water conservation, stormwater management, and low impact development practices, which are not explicitly stated in the County's existing Federal Legislative Agenda.)

u. Support proposals that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution from solid waste landfills and increase the use of landfill gases as an energy source for generating electricity or heat.

(Requested by DPH: Landfill gases are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions as well as air pollution, but can be an asset when used as a source of energy to generate electricity or heat.)

19. Waste Management and Superfund

a. Support measures which protect local governments from excessive and unjustified liability for hazardous waste cleanup **and which provide funding to local governments to clean up hazardous waste sites**.

(Requested by DPH: The Federal government should share the cost of cleaning hazardous waste sites.)

h. Support proposals that would provide for the safe collection and disposal of medical waste materials, such as medical needles.

(Requested by DPH: Medical needles are commonly disposed with municipal waste where they pose a health threat to the public and sanitation workers.)

21. Utilities and Energy

f. Support funding which would assist local governments in reducing energy consumption, shifting energy usage to non-peak hours, promoting energy efficiency, using renewable resources, and developing local energy strategies.

(Requested by Internal Services Department (ISD): Federal funding would help the County in its efforts to improve energy efficiency.)

25. Federalism

i. Support proposals which would provide state and local governments with the option of using Federal supply schedules to acquire goods and services.

(Requested by ISD: Based on this policy, the County would support legislation, such as H.R. 3179, passed by the House in December 2007, which would allow state and local governments to acquire goods and services from vendors using the Federal General Services Administration's (GSA) supply schedules. This would enable the County to purchase goods and services at prices that the GSA has negotiated with vendors. This option would be especially helpful when the County needs to acquire goods and services quickly to respond to emergencies or disasters.)